

## Special Notes:

Because the regulations apply state-wide, if burning is unauthorized, merely moving a burn site would not constitute compliance.

Confined and controlled burning would likely be subject to rules governing incineration and would require special permits, source observation, and possible testing. Burn barrels and fire pits are governed by open burning rules. Incinerators, bought or home-made, are subject to strict incinerator pollution standards.



The Tennessee Division of Forestry requires that you obtain a burning permit for wildfire prevention between October 15 and May 15, in most areas. The permits are free and may usually be obtained by telephone. Please call the Forestry Office in your county for more information.

Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, and Shelby Counties have their own State-approved local air programs that are at least as stringent as the Tennessee program. Please contact your local air program if you plan to burn in one of these four counties.

Many city or county ordinances further restrict open burning. These ordinances are enforceable at the local government level



### For Additional Information:

To view or download the actual regulations, go to <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1200/1200-03/1200-03-04.pdf>. You may obtain Acrobat Reader at [www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/rules.ntm](http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/rules.ntm). If you need a printed copy and do not have internet access, or have other air-related concerns, please call your Regional Environmental Assistance Center at 1-888-891-TDEC.

**For all your environmental concerns, call toll-free:**  
**1-888-891-TDEC**

#### Environmental Assistance Centers:

**Chattanooga** - 540 McCallie Ave., Suite 550,  
Chattanooga, TN 37402.  
Ph: (423) 634-5745

**Columbia** - 2484 Park Plus Dr., Columbia, TN  
38401.  
Ph: (931) 380-3371

**Cookeville** - 1221 So. Willow Ave., Cookeville,  
TN 38506.  
Ph: (931) 432-4015

**Jackson** - 362 Carriage House Dr.,  
Jackson, TN 38305.  
Ph: (731) 512-1300

**Johnson City** - 2305 Silverdale Rd., Johnson  
City, TN 37601.  
Ph: (423) 854-5400

**Knoxville** - 2700 Middlebrook Pk., Suite 220,  
Knoxville, TN 37921.  
Ph: (865) 594-6035

**Nashville** - 711 R.S. Gass Blvd., Nashville, TN  
37243.  
Ph: (615) 687-7000

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation is committed to principles of equal opportunity, equal access and affirmative action. Contact the EEO/AA Coordinator or the ADA Coordinator at 1-888-867-2757 for further information. Hearing impaired callers may use the Tennessee Relay Service (1-800-848-0298).



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# OPEN BURNING GUIDELINES

## TENNESSEE DIVISION OF AIR POLLUTION CONTROL



**“Don’t Burn Trash”**



**1-888-891-TDEC**

**Open Burning** is burning of material where the resulting smoke does not pass through a stack. This includes burning in a barrel, a fire pit, or simply a pile on the ground.



Generally, Tennessee regulations only allow you to open burn natural substances such as leaves, limbs, or untreated lumber (See the list of permissible types of open burning on the next page).

Any substance, which has been man-made or altered from its natural state, should not be burned. Fines may be imposed upon those who violate the regulations. A local governing body may not grant permission to violate the prohibition.



These regulations were enacted to ensure that the health, safety, comfort, and property of persons are protected. Open burning emits pollutants limited by National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Illegal open burning also emits toxic and reactive chemicals into the air we breathe, and can contribute to a multitude of health problems.

**Note:** Some materials can never be included in open burning conducted under the exceptions that follow. *These expressly prohibited materials include: tires & other rubber products; vinyl siding & shingles, & other plastics; asphalt shingles & other asphalt roofing materials; any asbestos containing materials.*



## **Exceptions To Tennessee's State-wide Prohibition On Open Burning\*:**

- **Non-commercial cooking fires** (e.g., barbeque grills)
- **Ceremonial fires** (e.g., bonfires)
- **Recreational or comfort heating fires** (e.g., campfires)
- **Fires containing only vegetation grown on the burn site property**
- **Fires disposing of untreated wood waste** (e.g., sawmill slabs and clean wooden pallets). *Note: lumber products containing glue (plywood, fiberboard, particleboard, paneling, etc), vegetation not grown on the burn site, painted or stained wood, chemically-treated wood (pressure-treated lumber, etc), paper, and cardboard, are not considered "wood waste", and shall not be burned.*



You may only start your fire with either of the following priming materials:

- **#1 grade fuel oil (Kerosene)**
- **#2 grade fuel oil (Diesel)**



\*Other special exceptions exist, but are subject to special restrictions, and may require notification or compliance certification. Contact an Environmental Assistance Center at 1-888-891-TDEC for details.

## **Recommendations for Less Harmful Burning:**

- Locate and conduct the burning in a manner that will minimize the impact on nearby persons and property.
- Allow vegetation to dry a minimum of 10 days after being cut to promote good combustion.
- Burn between 9:00 am and 3:30 pm to enhance smoke dispersion. Do not burn during periods of air stagnation advisories.



## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

*I have been burning my household trash for years. Is this legal?*



**No!** The types of materials found in most household waste will not qualify for allowed open burning under the listed "Exceptions", and in fact may be toxic when burned.

*What can I do with my trash if I can't burn it?*



**Reduce-Reuse-Recycle!** Try composting yard waste, vegetables, etc. Contact your local Solid Waste director for recycling opportunities and approved disposal options.

*A business near me disposes of pallets, lumber scraps, or sawmill slabs by open burning? Is this allowed?*



**Yes,** provided that the wood waste is untreated, unpainted, and contains no glues.

- *May a business open burn cardboard and paper?*

**No!** Cardboard and paper materials are not "wood waste", and should be recycled.